A

LETTER

Written by the

Bishop of Winchester

TO HER

HIGHNESS

THE

Dutchess of York

Some few Months before Her

DEATH.

LONDON:

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A LETTER TO HER Royal Highneſs FROM THE BISHOP of *WINTON.*

MADAM,

THE relation of *Friendſhip* I have had to *Your Father*, (before and ever ſince You were Born) and the relation of *Service* I have had unto *Your Self* (ever ſince it pleaſed God to advance you to your preſent *Grandeur*) will not ſuffer me to be altogether *Unconcerned* in any Thing, wherein I think *Your Highneſs* to be *Concerned* very much; eſpecially in regard of Your *Spiritual* and *Everlaſting* condition, in order whereunto I have had the honour to be more particularly Imployed by You for many Years together.

It was upon this Conſideration, *Madam*, that in *Lent* laſt I did preſume to acquaint *Your Highneſs* with a *Report* I had met with in many Places, and from ſeveral

Perſons, as well within as without the *Court*; and ſome of them neither *Yours*, nor *Your Fathers* Enemies, but rather very Well-wiſhers to You both, that *Your Highneſs* was generally ſuſpected to be at leaſt *wavering* in Your *Religion*, if not totally *alienated* in Your heart from it. And of this (beſides the Brags of ſome *Papiſts* to that purpoſe) they alledged, to make the *Suſpicion* the more probable, *two Reaſons*; of which the *One* was of Your abſenting your ſelf from two or three *Monthly Communions* together, which you never had done ſo much as once formerly: the *Other*, that in matters of *Difference* both of Opinion, and Practiſe betwixt *Us* and the *Papiſts*, Your *Highneſs* had often, and openly declared Your ſelf in favour of *Them* againſt *Us*. Which though You might do, (as I told them I ſuppoſe you did) by way of *Diſcourſe*, or for *Diſpute* ſake only; yet becauſe it was otherwiſe *Interpreted* and *Reported* by Thoſe that heard it, and otherwiſe *Believed* and *Talked* of by the Generality of the People, eſpecially in and about *London*, to the very great Grief and Trouble of thoſe that are indeed Your *Friends*, and to the very great Joy and Exultation of thoſe that may *ſeem* perhaps to be your *Friends*, but are indeed your *Mortal Enemies*, and have ſufficiently declared themſelves to be ſo: I could not chuſe but let *Your Highneſs* know what I had heard, that I might have from Your own mouth wherewithall to ſtop Theirs, that were ſo loudly and ſo maliciouſly opened againſt You. And ſo I thought I had, when *Your Highneſs* was pleaſed to tell me that the *Report* I ſpoke of (whomſoever it came from) was falſe and groundleſs.

leſs. For as to what was ſaid of your omitting to *Receive* twice or thrice, though it were true in point of *Fact*, yet the Conjecture that was made upon it had no Truth in it; for it was (as you ſaid) an Indiſpoſition in your *Body*, and not any Change in your *Mind*, that kept you from it, as it ſhall (ſaid you) appear by my receiving of it at *Eaſter*, which was then near, and when indeed you did receive it; adding, that you would not receive the *Sacrament*, no not ſo much as *once*, (though it were to ſave your life) if you were not of that *Church* wherein you did receive it; ſo that your receiving with us, (as you ſaid you would) the *Eaſter* following, after ſuch and ſo ſolemn a *Proteſtation* as You then made, I could deſire no greater an *Evidence* for mine own Satisfaction, nor no ſtronger a *Proof* to convince others, that *Your Highneſs* was ſtill the ſame you had been always formerly, in point of *Religion*; and conſequently, enough to ſilence all Diſcourſes, and to ſtifle all Reports, whereby Men were made to *believe* or *ſuſpect* otherwiſe of You. But when after all my Indeavours to that purpoſe I found I could not, I began to Conſider with *my ſelf*, and to Enquire of *others* that were your Friends, what might be the true Cauſe and Ground of the *continuance* and *increaſe* of thoſe falſe and malicious *Miſreports* of You, notwithſtanding your own open *Profeſſion* and *Practiſe* to the contrary. And we were all of that Opinion, that it was *partly* the Malice of your Enemies, and *partly* the Vanity and Artifice of the *Romiſh Party*, and *Romiſh Prieſts* themſelves.

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And firſt the *Malice* of your *Enemies*, who thinking Themſelves to be in Danger, as long as You are Safe, and knowing how great an Intereſt you had gotten in the hearts of the People, by being ſo glorious a *Profeſſor* of the *Proteſtant Religion*, and withall ſo great an *Ornament* and *Support to it*, and conſequently that it would be a vain and deſperate *Attempt* to indeavour to ruin you in your *Perſon*, and in your *Relations*, before they had firſt ruin'd you in your *Reputation* and *Eſteem* with the People: they thought it their ſureſt and their readieſt *way*, and the ſafeſt too, to give it out, and to make it to be believed, that whatſoever you had been heretofore, or ſeemed to be now, you were indeed a *Papiſt*, or at leaſt *Popiſhly affected* in your heart, and would ſhortly declare your ſelf to be ſo. This they at firſt gave out in *Whiſpers*, but ſuch as were to be whiſper'd from Ear to Ear, until it became the *common Diſcourſe* in *Coffee* Houſes, and conſequently the *publick Talk* of all ſorts of People in all Places, thereby intending (as much as in them lay) to make as many as were either averſe from *Popery*, or afraid of it, (which I take to be 99 Parts in a hundred of the whole *Nation*) to be as much your *Enemies*, as they were themſelves, and conſequently not to care what ſhould be done to *You*, or become of *You*, or of *your Children*.

Thus the *Rebels* ſtole away the hearts of the People from the late *King of moſt bleſſed Memory*, who though he was ſo ſincere, and ſo zealous a *Profeſſor* and *Aſſertor* of the Religion of the *Church of England*, that at length he became a *Martyr* for it, yet his *Enemies* by raiſing

raiſing and ſpreading ſuch malicious and ſcandalous *Reports* againſt him, (as are now raiſed and diſperſed againſt You) made the credulous People believe, that he was indeed a *Papiſt* and intended to bring in *Popery*: upon which account only they raiſed many *Thouſands* againſt him, without whoſe aſſiſtance they could never have over-power'd and oppreſſed him as they did. And the Succeſs they had thereby againſt the *Father*, incouraged them to make uſe of the ſame Engine againſt his *Son*, by giving it out that the *KING* by living ſo long abroad in *Popiſh Countries* was ſo corrupted in his *Religion*, that if he were ſuffered to return he would bring home *Popery* along with him. So that with this groundleſs *Fear*, I found many very *Conſiderable* and very much *Intereſted* Perſons to be poſſeſt, when I was ſent into *England*, about two months before the *Kings* return; moſt of which time I ſpent in undeceiving all I met with, eſpecially the Heads and Leaders of the *Presbyterian* and *Independent* Parties (who ſeemed to be moſt afraid of ſuch a Change) by aſſuring them that thoſe *Miſreports* they had heard of the *KING* and his *Brothers*, were nothing elſe but the malicious Inventions of thoſe, that were either in *fact*, or in *conſent*, the Murderers of their *Father*, and conſequently irreconcileable and implacable Enemies unto his *Children*. For (ſaid I) to my certain Knowledg, who was almoſt always an Eye-witneſs of their actions, the *KING* and both his *Brothers* did not only by their *Profeſſion*, but by their *Practiſe* declare and teſtifie themſelves to be true Sons of the *Church of England* (even in the midſt of its Enemies) by coming *daily*

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to our *Prayers*, and *weekly* to our *Sermons*, and *frequently* to our *Communnions*. Which I do not now Repeat by way of *Boaſting* of what I did; for though it was all I *could* do, yet perhaps it was leſs, I am ſure it was no more than I am *bound* to do. But I repeat this, and what I ſaid before of the late *King*, to let *your Highneſs* ſee, how dangerous a thing it is for any of the *Royal Family* to ſuffer themſelves to be traduced to the People by any ſuch Reports and Diſcourſes, as now are made of *your Highneſs*: which certainly ought not to be deſpiſed or neglected, but carefully and ſeriouſly to be enquir'd into, and ſpeedily to be ſuppreſſed by a ſevere and exemplary Puniſhment of the *Authors* and *Abettors* of them.

It was very well and wiſely done therefore of our preſent *Sovereign*, (remembring his *Fathers* Fate and the Cauſe of it) to paſs an *Act of Parliament* preſently after his coming home, whereby, the ſaying that the *King* is a *Papiſt* or that he indeavours to introduce *Popery*, is made puniſhable in a very high degree. And it is obſervable, that this *Act* wherein this *Clauſe* is, is in the *Title* of it called An *Act for the ſafety and preſervation of the KINGS Perſon and Government*; thereby implying that the raiſing and ſpreading of ſuch *Reports*, muſt needs be very *Dangerous*, and conſequently, thoſe that raiſe or ſpread them very *Criminal*; as being indeed the greateſt Enemies both of the *King* and *Kingdom*: which though it be moſt true, when ſuch *Reports* reflect immediately on the *KING* himſelf, yet is it in proportion true likewiſe, when any of the *Royal Family* are concerned in it. So that they are the *Kings*

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and Kingdoms Enemies, as well as *Yours* and *your Huſbands*, and *your Childrens*, that were the *Authors*, and are the *Abettors* of what is ſo generally ſpoken, and ſeems to be ſo generally believed of *your Royal Highneſs* in this particular: to the divulging and the belief whereof, I do verily think that none have been more Active, nor ſo much Inſtrumental, as ſome of the *Popiſh Party*, and amongſt them eſpecially the *Popiſh Prieſts* themſelves, and that partly out of *Vanity*, and partly out of *Cunning*. For, as ſome of our *Secular Gallants* do, out of *Vanity* only, ſometimes boaſt of favours, they have received from ſuch or ſuch *Women* of known Honour and Virtue, though they never did nor ever durſt ſpeak ſo much as one word to any of Them to any ſuch purpoſe, ſo do many of the *Clergy Cavaliers* of the Church of *Rome*, as vainly vaunt, how Many and how Great *Proſelytes* they have made, and of how many conſiderable Perſons, of both Sexes, they have gained from *our* Church unto *theirs*; which though it be too true in too many, yet as to ſome whom they moſt boaſt of, and would fain have it believed they have prevail'd with, (as particularly and eſpecially with *your Royal Highneſs*) I am confident it is but a vain Brag; and yet I do not think 'tis done out of *Vanity* only, but out of *Artifice* and *Cunning* alſo; becauſe they have good Reaſon to hope, that if they can make it to be believed that they have gained but one ſuch *Proſelyte* as your *Highneſs*, it would be the moſt effectual Means, they can make uſe of, to perſwade Others; and conſequently the moſt compendious way they can take in Order to their main End.

In the mean time, it is another notable Effect of their *Fineneſs* and *Subtilty*, that when They themſelves have been the *Authors* and *Divulgers* of ſuch a malicious and ſcandalous *Report*, and done You all the Miſchief they can by it, than if they find Thoſe that are moſt Concerned in it, to be Alarum'd with it, and to reſent it with that indignation as ſo bold and ſo injurious a Practiſe ought indeed to be reſented withall; then, I ſay, the next thing they do, is by ſuch *Inſtruments* (as they never want about *great Perſons* upon ſuch Occaſions) to perſwade the Parties concerned in ſuch Reports, that all the Noiſe which they hear, and which ſeems to diſquiet them ſo much, is not from the howling of thoſe *Wolves*, but from the barking of their own *Dogs*, who being as they ſay more afraid than hurt, do by giving too ſoon and too loud a Warning of a *Danger* which they think to be greater and nearer than it is, rather increaſe than leſſen the Noiſe which was made before, and which perhaps would have ceaſed of it ſelf, if too much Notice had not been taken, as there was of it.

And ſuch an *Artifice* as this it was to inform your *Highneſs* (as ſome body did,) that this Clamour againſt *your Highneſs* from whomſoever it had its firſt *Riſe*, it had its *Growth* from ſome of *our Clergy*, and particularly from *Me* for One; as if I had given ſome body or other ſome Cauſe to Believe it, and conſequently made it more to be Suſpected and Spoken of by others than it was before; which, (as I then ſaid) I hope there is none knows me,

me, can think Me (though I was never ſo *Wicked*) to be ſo very a *Fool*, as to believe of me. For what *End* could I have, (eſpecially having had ſuch, and ſo long a Relation to *your Highneſs*, as I had) what End (I ſay) could I have in making *your Highneſs* Believed, or Suſpected to be a *Papiſt*, unleſs it were to make my ſelf to be believed to be a *Papiſt* alſo? and conſequently to be an old arrant *Hypocrite*; ſeeing I always *did*, and *do*, and ever *ſhall*, by the Grace of God, profeſs the contrary, though I were to dye at a ſtake for ſo doing. No, no, *Maddam*! it was neither I, nor, as I verily believe, any of *our Prieſts* or *Biſhops* but as I then ſaid, they were ſome of the *Prieſts* of the *Church of Rome*, that in all probability were both the *Authors* and *Abettors* of this *Scandal*: and that I was told no longer ago than the night before, by a *Perſon of Honour* and *Title*, that the very day before he came to me, he was told by a *Romiſh Prieſt*, that *your Highneſs* was already of their Church, and would very ſhortly declare your ſelf to be ſo: Whereunto my Reply was, that although I did believe his *Lordſhip*, yet I did not, and hoped he would not believe the *Prieſt* that told him ſo; becauſe your *Highneſs* had been pleaſed, (as I told his *Lordſhip*) not long before, to give me all the Aſſurance I could deſire to the contrary; with which Anſwer I ſent him away very well ſatisfied; for he came to *Chelſey* on purpoſe to enquire of me, whether what the *Prieſt* had newly and confidently told him were true or no. And ſo did many other of *Quality*,

both Men and Women, to whom I gave the ſame Anſwer, and (as I believe) with the ſame Succeſs. And this is All that either before or ſince I have done, to Increaſe or Countenance that *Report*.

But (as I preſently after informed *your Highneſs* your ſelf) it was not, nor ever would be in my power, nor in the power of any, or of all His or Your *Highneſſes* Friends or Servants, to ſilence this Report, or to hinder the People from giving credit to it; unleſs You your ſelf would appear in it, and would openly upon all occaſions declare your Deteſtation of it, as of a moſt falſe and a moſt malicious *Slander*, deviſed and deſigned by your *Enemies* to do you all the Miſchief they could, without any ground or colour of ground for it; and that you would not nor could not take them for your *Friends*, that either did believe it Themſelves, or that did not do what they could, that it might not be believed by Others. For without ſome ſuch *Proteſtation* as this (as I then told your *Highneſs*) ſeriouſly and ſeaſonably Made, and publickly and frequently Repeated by You to ſuch *Perſons of Quality* and *Intereſt* of both Sexes, as came daily to wait upon you, I did then, and do ſtill think it almoſt, if not altogether Impoſſible to undeceive the People, or to make them think otherwiſe than your *Enemies* by their malicious Reports have made them to think and to ſpeak of You: though nothing but your own *Declaration* of your ſelf to be as they report you (which I hope I ſhall never live to ſee or hear of) ſhall ever make me believe, that you

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are not ſtill in point of *Religion* the ſame that you were when I had the Honour to wait upon you, and as I am ſure You was, when I left you.

And this I am the rather obliged to believe, becauſe the laſt time I had any diſcourſe with *your Highneſs* of things of this nature, you did ſeriouſly affirm to me, that never any Prieſt of the *Church of Rome* had ever been ſo bold as to enter into any diſcourſe of *Religion* with you. Whereupon when I humbly beſought *your Highneſs*, that if any of them ſhould be ſo bold at any time afterwards, and you ſhould think fit to hear what they could ſay either for their own Church, or againſt ours; your *Highneſs* would be pleaſed to command them to give it you in Writing, and that you would be pleaſed to ſhew me, or my Lord of *Oxford*, any ſuch Papers or Paper, they ſhould give you to conſider of, and to reply to: the which becauſe You were pleaſed to promiſe me you would do and have never as yet done, (not to *Me* I am ſure, nor to *Him* neither, for ought I know) I cannot believe that any thing of that Kind hath been as yet ſaid to you, at leaſt not ſo, as to make any Impreſſion in you; and much leſs to gain an abſolute Belief from you, that there is no Salvation to be had but in the *Church of Rome* only; and conſequently, that if ever you mean to be ſaved, you muſt of neceſſity quit *our* Communion, and embrace *theirs*. I cannot believe (I ſay) that any ſuch *Diſcourſe* hath as yet been made to You, becauſe whatſoever is talked of by

Others,

Others, you have ſaid nothing *Your ſelf* to me of it, which certainly you would have done, (if there had been any ſuch thing) having obliged your ſelf by promiſe to do ſo, and having had ſeveral opportunities of ſo doing; eſpecially, when you were pleaſed to honour my Houſe at *Farnham* with your Preſence for ſo many days together, where and when I did indeed expect You would have ſaid ſomething to me (according to your promiſe, if there had been cauſe for it) which becauſe You did not I concluded there had been no ſuch Attempt made; and conſequently, that there was no need of my ſaying any thing to You of it, as if I had doubted whether you had or would keep your Word with me or no.

And truly, *Madam*, though you had made no ſuch *Promiſe*; I cannot but believe that if there had any ſuch *Scruple* been ſuggeſted to you from *within*, or offer'd to you from *without*, you would have acquainted Me or the Biſhop of *Oxford*, or ſome other of our Order or Profeſſion with it; eſpecially if the Doubts or Scruples had been ſuch as you your ſelf could not anſwer. For though God hath given you an extraordinary good *Underſtanding*, yet I am ſure, you have not ſo high an Opinion of it, as to conclude, that what You cannot anſwer, is therefore Unanſwerable in it ſelf; or that it cannot be anſwered by Others; and particularly by ſome of Thoſe, whoſe *Profeſſion* and *Office* it is to defend the truth of our Church, and the truth of the Doctrine

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that is profeſs'd in it, and taught by it, againſt all Objections that either by *Schiſmaticks* or *Hereticks* are or can be made againſt it; ſo that whatſoever they may whiſper in Corners to the contrary, neither the One, nor the Other ſhall ever be able to prove either that there is any thing neceſſary to be *Believed* or *Practiſed* for the ſaving of Souls which we do not teach, or that we do teach any thing that is deſtructive of *Salvation*, or which is inconſiſtent with the *Rule of Faith*, or *Holineſs of life*, which was at firſt delivered by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and which was afterwards held by the *Primitive Fathers*, in the moſt antient and pureſt Ages of the Church; and conſequently whatſoever may be pretended, it never was nor ever can be proved, but that thoſe that live and die in the *Profeſſion* and *Practiſe* of what they are taught to *believe* and to *do* by the Doctrine of *our Church*, muſt needs be in the right way, which will undoubtedly bring them into Heaven, if they continue in it. Whereas if they depart from it, they will be in a worſe, and in a much more dangerous condition than if they had never known it.

For although we have ſo much *Charity* for ſome that live and die in the *Belief* and *Practiſe* of ſome *erroneous Doctrines*, and of ſome *ſuperſtitious Uſances* of the *Church of Rome*; ſuppoſing they do both the one and the other out of *invincible Ignorance*, and ſuppoſing too, that they would have continued in neither, if they had known or ſuſpected them to be either

either *erroneous* or *ſuperſtitious*, and conſequently, that they had a preparation of mind to *believe*, and *practiſe* the contrary Truths, if they had been made known unto them, or rather, if they had not by their falſe Teachers been concealed from them: and laſtly ſuppoſing likewiſe that as they do *actually* and *particularly* repent of all their *known ſins*, ſo they do *habitually*, or *in the general*, truly and heartily repent before they die of all their *unknown ſins* alſo; or of all ſuch ſins of theirs which God knows to be ſins, though they do not; and conſequently of all ſuch *Errors* and *Superſtitions* as they have ignorantly, and unwittingly, and unwillingly lived in. Although (I ſay) we have ſo much *Charity* for ſome that have been born, and lived, and died in the Communion of the *Church of Rome* as not to deny upon the aforeſaid *Suppoſitions* they may be Saved, not **Becauſe** but **Notwithſtanding** they lived and died in that *Church*, which is no more than the Charity which upon the ſame ſuppoſition they have for Us, or for thoſe that live and die in *our Church*: yet we have not, nor cannot have the ſame *Hope* for *Thoſe* that having been born and bred in *our Church*, and ſufficiently inſtructed in the Doctrine of it, do afterwards become *Apoſtates* from it, and *Proſelytes* to the *Church of Rome*, by renouncing thoſe Truths they were taught in the *one*, and profeſſing thoſe Falſities they are made to believe in the *other*: for whom (as I ſaid) we have no ſuch *hope*, nor indeed any hope at all, unleſs they do actually and parti-

particularly repent of *this*, as well as of all other their known ſins, and withall do teſtifie the truth of that Repentance, by returning again unto Us, and by asking *God* and the *Church* forgiveneſs for the *Sin* againſt the *one*, and for their *Scandal* againſt the *other*, by their going away from us, if at leaſt they have time and opportunity to do it.

Now this (according to our Opinion) being the difference betwixt thoſe that after the Knowledg and Profeſſion of the Truth, go out from us, and thoſe that would (if they had known the Truth) have come over to us, it is manifeſt, that the *Charity* we have for the *One*, though they live and die in the *Church of Rome*, can be no Motive or Incouragement for thoſe of the *Other* ſort to go and live and die there, no more than it can be any Warrant for a Sound man to go out of an healthy Air and to put himſelf in a *Peſt-Houſe*, becauſe there is a poſſibility that ſome one or a few may not die of the Plague there. And this I do the rather Obſerve, becauſe, from this Charitable opinion of ours towards ſome that live and die in their *Communion*, they uſually infer (as a *Preface* to their making of *Proſelytes*) that it muſt needs be much better and ſafer to be of *Their* Religion than of *Ours*, becauſe we confeſs that ſome may be *ſaved* among *Them*, but they do all deny there is any *Salvation* to be had amongſt *Us*. Which if it were true (as indeed it is not) they might from thence infer as well that it was better and ſafer to be of the *Donatiſts* Religion,

who were condemned Hereticks, than of St. *Auſtins*; becauſe that St. *Auſtin* did not deny that ſome among the *Donatiſts* could be ſaved, but all the *Donatiſts* did affirm that none that were not, or would not be *Donatiſts* could be ſaved. Which is the very ſame which the *Papiſts* affirm now, and for which they may as well now, as the *Donatiſts* were then, be called *Hereticks*; for excluding as the *Donatiſts* did all Chriſtians but themſelves, from a capacity or poſſibility of Salvation. And why ſo? becauſe (forſooth ſay they) there is no *Salvation* to be had but in the *Catholick Church*, and no man is of the *Catholick Church*, that is not of *their Church*, becauſe the *Catholick Church* is *their Church*, and *their Church* is the *Catholick Church*; and conſequently he that is not of the *one*, cannot be of the *other*. And did not the *Donatiſts* ſay ſo too? and was it not for their ſo ſaying that they were pronounced *Hereticks*? And the *Papiſts* may as well and truly ſay, that becauſe a man is not in *Rome*, therefore he is not in *Italy*, or becauſe he is not in *London*, therefore he is not in *England*; or becauſe this Part is not a part of that part, therefore it is not a part of the whole, which they muſt prove before they can make any reaſonable man to believe that we cannot be *Catholicks*, unleſs we will be *Papiſts*, or which is all one that we cannot be *Catholicks* at all, unleſs we be *Roman Catholicks*. Whereas we may be *Catholicks*, by ſubmitting to the Laws of *Chriſt* contained in the Goſpel: but we cannot be *Roman Catholicks*, but by ſubmitting to the dictates of the *Pope*, and *Popiſh Councils*, particularly to that of *Trent*

and

and the *Canons* thereof, which are many of them nothing akin to the *Canon of the Scriptures.* For *drink ye all of this*, ſaith the *Canon of Scripture*, but you ſhall not drink *all* of this, ſaith the *Pope* and the *Canons* of his *Councils*; and many other the like Inſtances might be given in other particulars.

But I forget what I was a doing, which was not to *diſpute* with Them, 'till they have been ſo bold as to diſpute with You; which I do all this while ſuppoſe they have not done yet, becauſe you have not yet given me any Intimation of it, as I am confident you would have done, not only becauſe you *promis'd* you would do ſo, but becauſe without any ſuch *Promiſe*, I preſume you would have thought your ſelf concerned in point of *Prudence* and *Equity*, and of *Conſcience* too, having heard what could be ſaid by any of them to draw you from us, to hear likewiſe what could be ſaid by ſome of Us to keep you with us. For to conclude in favour of *one* ſide without hearing of the *other*, is that which cannot be done either in *Equity* or *Conſcience*, though you your ſelf were to gain never ſo much by it; whereas in this Caſe if you ſhould be ſurpris'd and prevail'd with for want of *Advice* or *Counſel* to aſſiſt you, you might have loſt Your ſelf and your ſoul by it, which is too pretious a Gage, and coſt too dear to be hazarded upon Confidence of Ones ſtrength againſt ſuch ſubtil *Gameſters* as they are. For what would this have been, but to do as *Eve* did? who entring alone into the Liſts with the *Serpent* (though ſhe had much more wit than any of her Sex had ſince) ſhe

was eaſily foyl'd by him, as perhaps ſhe would not have been, if it had not been in the abſence of her Huſband; or if after ſhe had heard what the *Tempter* could ſay, ſhe had afterwards ſuſpended, at leaſt her Conſent to the *Temptation* until ſhe had acquainted the Man with it, and heard what he was able to reply to it; which becauſe (relying too much upon her own Judgment) ſhe neglected to do, we ſee ſhe did as much as in her lay to undo, and undo for ever, *Herſelf* and *her Husband*, and all their *Poſterity* by the loſs of all their Enjoyments for the *preſent*, and of all their Hopes for the *future* alſo. So raſh and ſo dangerous a thing it is for any (though of never ſo great a Sufficiency) to rely too much upon Themſelves, when all their Concerns, both here and hereafter, are at ſtake.

And therefore, *Madam*! being ſo prudent a Perſon as you are, and knowing ſo well as you do, how great a Hazard you may run of loſing all that is or ought to be Dear to you, I am confident, you will not ſuffer your ſelf to be diſputed out of your *Religion* for want of *Seconds* to aſſiſt you; which ſeeing you have not hitherto called for, or made uſe of, I do and muſt conclude, that hitherto the *Adverſaries* of our *Church* have either made no Attempt upon you, or have been rejected with Indignation by you. And in this Belief I am more and more confirm'd, becauſe you ſtill joyn with us in the *Prayers* of the *Church*, as having them daily by your own Appointment read in your Hearing; which though *Some* perhaps of thoſe that are departed from Us with their hearts, may be content to do, in Compliance with

with ſome preſent worldly Intereſt; yet I am ſure you cannot diſpenſe with Your ſelf, nor ſuffer Your ſelf to be diſpenſed with, in any thing of that nature; becauſe *You* your ſelf have told me more than once (even ſince this falſe Report hath been rais'd of you) that you would not do any thing, whereby you might ſeem to be of a *Church*, or of a *Religion* which you are not of indeed; no, not for any worldly Conſideration whatſoever. Which is indeed ſuch an *Ingenuity* as well becomes a *Chriſtian*, eſpecially of your *Quality*, and ſuch as gives me an Aſſurance, that You are ſtill *ours*; and that you will continue to be ſo, until You your ſelf by your Words or Actions ſhall declare the contrary, which I hope you never will, and I am ſure you never can with a good Conſcience, until you have heard and conſidered all that can be ſaid on both ſides. For if you ſhould do otherwiſe, it will never be believed that your leaving of Our *Church*, wherein you were born and bred, to go to Theirs, is only out of love to the *Truth*; or becauſe They, and not We, are in the right way to Heaven; (of which without hearing what we can ſay for our way, and againſt theirs, it is impoſſible for you to judg) but from ſome Byas or by-end from without; which becauſe I know it is that which you abhor ſhould be thought or ſuſpected of you, therefore (as I have ſaid often already) I will not, I cannot believe that you have or ever will make any ſuch *Change* without hearing what we have to ſay againſt it; becauſe that will be not only an *Argument*, but almoſt an *Evidence* that it is from ſome other Motive, rather than

than Conſcience, becauſe you did not all you *might* and *ought* in Conſcience to have done, to warrant ſuch a *Change* before you made it; nay, it will be thought, and ſaid, You were afraid to hear what could be ſaid againſt it, leſt thereby you might be diverted from it.

Which *Conſideration* I beſeech you to remember, whenſoever there ſhall be, (though I hope there never will be) an Occaſion to make uſe of it; yet, in the mean time, there being no ſuch Change made yet, I humbly conceive *your Highneſs* is obliged in *Conſcience* as well as in *Prudence* to make ſome ſuch *Declaration* (as I before ſpake of) namely, that the *Report* of your being changed in your Religion, or that you intend any ſuch Change, or are at all inclined to it, is *falſe* and *ſcandalous*, deviſed and publiſhed by the Malice of your *Enemies* to make you loſe the Affections of your *Friends*, and to alienate the hearts of the People from *You* and from your *Children*: and that You never did nor ever will give any juſt Cauſe for the Belief of it.

Some ſuch *Declaration* I ſay (as I humbly conceive) *your Highneſs* is bound in *conſcience*, as well as in *prudence* to make, to prevent ſuch Miſchiefs as the Continuance and Increaſe and Belief of this odious Report may bring upon *You*, and upon all your *Relations*. For although that be true which you are wont to ſay, that no worldly, either *Advantage* or *Prejudice*, is to be conſidered, when the gaining of the One, or the avoiding of the Other comes into Competition with the hazarding or ſecuring of our ſpiritual and everlaſting Intereſt, of our Souls; and conſequently, that if you were Convin-

Convinced there were no *Salvation* to be had but in the *Church of Rome*, no Conſideration either of *Loſs* or of *Danger* here in this World you might incur by it, ſhould keep you from it: yet when you are not ſo perſwaded, (as I do all this while ſuppoſe You are not) then I hope you may and ought to do what you can, that you may not be believed or ſuſpected to be ſo; eſpecially if it being but ſuſpected to be ſo, will in all probability do You and all that relate to you every whit as much Miſchief in the opinion of the People, as if really and indeed you were ſo; wherewithall I will conclude. Humbly begging your *Highneſſes* pardon, for having given you ſo great a Trouble, the rather becauſe conſidering my great *Age*, and conſequently my near approaching *End*, it may be (beſides my *Prayers*) the *laſt Service* that may or can be done by

Jan. 24. 1670.

Your Highneſſes

moſt humble and faithful Servant,

GEOR. WINTON.

FINIS.